RECEIVED
OCT 21 2011

AFFIRMATION UNITED METHODIST

Affirmation

AN INDEPENDENT VOICE FOR:
UNITED METHODISTS FOR LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER, AND QUEER CONCERNS
PO BOX 1021, EVANSTON, IL 60204-1021 * UMAFFIRMATION_AT_YAHOO.COM *
WWW.UMAFFIRM.ORG

Volume 36 Issue 1 Summer 2011

Inside this issue:

Two Sides of Coalition Co-ordinating	2
Tampa Contacts Sought for GC 2012	4
It's Time to Think Christmas Cards	
Time to Dream Big	5
Looking Backward, Looking Forward	
Volunteer at GC 2012	
Jeanne Knepper Returns to Council	6
Council Welcomes New Member	7
Treasurer Report FY 2010	
Affirmation Spoke Out on Many Topics (Press Release Summary)	8
Donor Gives Her Testimony	9
Malaria 'N' GLBTQ Folks	10
Seize This Opportunity!	12

"Sing a New Song" with Gusto!

Join us to *Sing a New Song* Thursday, Aug. 25 – Sunday, Aug. 28 in Huron, OH.

Sing a New Song will replace the RMN Convo this year and will include leadership from all three Common Witness Coalition groups. Affirmation plans for this event include a reception one evening giving us a chance to let members of the other groups know who we are and what we do. We will have a display table from which we plan to sell our Christmas Cards as well as display LGBTQ items. We will be sponsoring three affinity groups at the conference this year: one for queer clergy, one for transgender folk, and one for persons who identify as bisexual.

Register for *Sing a New Song* at www.sans2011.org.

We'll see you there!

Council Plans for *Sing a New Song*, GC

By Stephen Mallett, Council Coordinator

On a very stormy day in late April, council members endured bumpy, late flights or drove through heavy rain to converge in Nashville for our spring meeting. We welcomed our new member Diana Chalfant, as well as Steve Clunn, the Coordinator for the Coalition of Methodist Federation for Social Action, Affirmation, and Reconciling Ministries Network. The three groups plan to work together to help bring about change for our United Methodist Church at General Conference 2012. Our treasurer, Jan Olson, also attended. Our meetings took place at a primitive, rural retreat some 35 miles out of Nashville in Primm Springs, TN. When we arrived at the meeting location, we found that the creek crossing necessary for us to get to our meeting space was still flooded from the rains of the day before, and only Diana's truck and Stephen's SUV were able to cross and ferry us and our gear to our cabins. Everyone remained of good cheer, and we had very

(Continued on page 11)

RECEIVED
FEB 26 2024
BY: .....

Two Sides of Coalition Coordinating

By Steve Clunn,
Common Witness Coalition Coordinator

Hi! My name is Steve Clunn and I've been a clergy person for the last 23 years in the United Methodist Church. I'm now the Coalition Coordinator for Affirmation, the Methodist Federation for Social Action (MFSA), and the Reconciling Ministries Network (RMN). My ministry now is to help these three Jesus justice organizations get ready for their Common Witness Coalition work at General Conference (GC) in Tampa, FL, April 24 to May 4, 2012. I work as a part of the MFSA staff in their Washington, DC office.

Since I began, I've made email and phone connections with the 31 active MFSA Chapters and in conferences where we have active friends. I was in New Orleans when Black Methodists for Church Renewal voted to support the retired Bishop's statement on opening up ordination to LGBTQ clergy. I'm now a proud associate member. I have traveled to visit with MFSA, RMN & Affirmation folk, or to be present for events they were holding, in 15 Annual Conferences. My goal is to get to all of them by the end of the year. I've been to meet with students at two of our seminaries. I've been to several board meetings. I've been on more conference calls and at more planning meetings than I care to remember.

I've had the privilege of being a part of writing a number of Coalition and MFSA responses to unfolding events in our church and world. I've tried to work with groups in Annual Conferences as they readied legislation that might find its way to GC 2012; and as they struggled to discern who might be the best delegates to GC to help our church move to embrace God's inclusive love for ALL.

Finally, I'm involved in ongoing logistical, legislative and volunteer coordinating efforts for both GC 2012 and most excitingly, for the Coalition's *"Sing A New Song"* event this August. If you don't know about *Sing a New Song* or haven't registered – go to www.sans2011.org and get there – it will be a gift to your spirit, faith and sense of hope!

I have never been so busy, so filled and so inspired by the work of others in the 23 years of ministry I've been involved in! Yet as blessed as I feel to be a Coalition Coordinator at this time in ministry in the UMC, I also have a sense of deep sadness. This is

(Continued on page 3)

Affirmation Newsletter

This Affirmation newsletter is published three times a year.
Only Affirmation's elected spokespersons may represent the official positions of this organization. Opinions here, signed or unsigned, are those of the writers, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of Affirmation.
Articles for consideration for publication may be submitted to: AffirmationNewsletter_at_yahoogroups.com*

All articles in this publication remain the property of Affirmation, and may be used only with written permission of Affirmation.
Co-Editors: Gary Shephard and Judy WestLee
© 2011 Affirmation: United Methodists for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Concerns;
PO Box 1021 Evanston, IL 60204.
www.umaffirm.org
E-mail:
umaffirmation_at_yahoo.com*

Mission Statement

As an independent voice of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer people, Affirmation radically reclaims the compassionate and transforming gospel of Jesus Christ by relentlessly pursuing full inclusion in the Church as we journey with the Spirit in creating God's beloved community.

Adopted January 2005

*** Note: substitute the symbol "@" for the letters "_at_" in the email addresses.**

Two Sides of Coalition Coordinating

(Continued from page 2)

based in the other side of my being and work. I confess that there is a part of me that is a Robert's Rules, legislative and strategizing Geek. I love debating and planning how to move issues that I care about forward in both people's consciousness and institutional policy. At the same time, I hate how much of that takes precedence over the people behind the issues. Especially in the life of the Church, it breaks a little piece of my heart every time we focus more on legislative strategies, talking points, and petitions, and forget the names, faces, and bruised souls that our church seems willing to discard.

I'm writing this article with an Annual Conference going on in the background. They have already started voting for delegates to GC 2012. This afternoon they will discuss, debate and vote on legislation to move forward to GC. I'm praying for those that I know will make not so disguised statements of judgment, fear and even hatred. I know I'll cringe and cry when I hear those words, and experience people using the book that inspires my life to exclude people based on orientation and gender expression, just as others once used it to exclude people based on race and gender.

Yet I'm also praying for those who will speak for others who are so often silenced in our church. I know I'll be moved and inspired by those who will pastor to and for others who are denied the right to follow their call to pastoral ministry. More than any legislative victories, or debating wins; I'm praying for opened hearts and an in pouring of God's Grace and Love.

When they discuss removing the "incompatibility language," I want them to feel the presence of Jordan, Jean, Lisa, Renee, Kathy, Chris and countless others; and know that it is their lives, faith and church homes they are naming them compatible with. When we discuss the disciplinary paragraph on ordination, I want them to hear behind the impassioned debate, the powerful and loving voices of Dan, Karen, Paul, Dana, David and Tom (and many others) who have inspired my preaching and ministry with their eloquence, grace and faith.

When GC 2012 comes around, we'll have been wandering in this wilderness of division, debate and exclusion for 40 years. That's too long to be focused on legislation rather than lives. That's too long to be debating about the limitations of God's love, grace and call based on sexual orientation and gender expression; rather than creating resources and ministries that offer something meaningful to help our world discover what being a good steward of God's good gift of human sexuality is all about.

Forty years is too long to watch our denomination decline in numbers and relevance; and to cry out that changing our position will cause us to lose members, while we are actively forcing gifted and vital clergy and laity out of our church because they have been told that they have been judged to be incompatible. I just want to be able to follow God's calling and serve my church with more grace, love and hope; and less shame, judgment and loss.

Yeah, my work seems to be strongly focused on legislation, logistics, strategies, debates and votes. However, in my heart, mind and soul it's about God's people, my friends, my inspiration and the fulfillment of God moving us on toward being made perfect in love – in and through my United Methodist Church. It's about coming out of the wilderness and into the new possibilities of a promised land within and through the UMC.

So keep me and the work I do in your prayers! If you run into me at an event and I seem to be lost in the dynamics of the processes of legislation and debate; call me on it and remind me that what I really need to focus on is a church where the whole Kin-dom of God can be present, welcomed and about the work of God's love and justice in the world! A place where *all* of God's beloved can come together and draw strength and inspiration from each other as we journey on in life and faith in the fullness of God's presence.

Tampa Contacts Sought for GC 2012

In April of 2012, a wonderfully diverse group of people will arrive in Tampa Bay, FL, to be a witness and testimony to the General Conference Session of the United Methodist Church. We will be traveling from all over to be present.

With our geographically diverse coalition it's important to have some local contacts from Tampa. Here are some of the things we will need:

1. People who can house coalition members who cannot afford hotel space.
2. People who have contacts with the food and restaurant industry.
3. People who are willing to help with organizing office and technical support.
4. People who are willing to participate in flash mobs or demonstrations.
5. People with contacts in the mental health field so we have places to refer those needing extra help during conference.
6. People to get up early and hand out newsletters to GC delegates.
7. People who know where to get a charger for a particular phone, or know where the local party supply store is. You just can't imagine what we're all going to need, or what's going to get left at home. You just can't imagine how important your knowledge of the area is to someone from out of town.
8. Finally, people who would like to hang out and have fun while volunteering with the coalition.

If you have contacts in the Tampa area please get in touch with them. If they are interested in helping have them email Walter Lockhart at [redacted] (replace the "_at_" with "@") or they can snail mail c/o Walker Community UMC, PO Box 7588, Minneapolis, MN 55407.

It's Time to Think Christmas Cards!

Yes, even though the calendar says that summer is just beginning, now is a great time to begin planning for Christmas. Just what kind of cards will you send to your friends and family? How do you express justice while also celebrating the season? The answer to these questions is through Affirmation: United Methodists' Christmas Cards.

For many years, people have been admiring the wonderful cards sent out each Christmas time by Affirmation. These cards are a powerful gift from one of our members, Jim Dietrich. This year we will again be mailing out Jim's special Affirmation Christmas cards. But this year you can also send them out to those whom you care about. These will be the same cards being sent out by the Council. They will have a message of God's love and justice for all people that is tailored specifically for the Christmas season. On the back will be a copy of the Affirmation: United Methodists Mission Statement and our contact information.

The cards will be available this August at Sing a New Song. After that, you will also be able to purchase bundles of the cards via email. Details will be announced later.

This is an opportunity to celebrate the joy of Christ's birth, to remind others that our work in reforming our denomination is still going strong, and to financially support that work through Affirmation. Questions? Please contact Tim Tennant-Jayne at [redacted] (Replace the "_at_" with "@").

Maybe It's Time to Dream Big

By Gary Shephard
Newsletter Co-Editor

GC 2008 in Fort Worth, TX was physically exhausting. Aside from my normal Affirmation GC duties of working on the daily newsletter, and miscellaneous duties, I live just northwest of town, and I was the local point person. My day started at 5 a.m. and usually wrapped up around 11:30 p.m.

By the time the debate on our issues came up, I was exhausted. I remember sitting in the convention center audience and suddenly having a panic attack. What if the vote went our way? What if we won a small victory? What would we do? I just didn't know. We've been travelling so long in the wilderness, experiencing rejection and defeat, that's all I know how to react to.

Unfortunately, the debate dragged on interminably, the votes didn't go our way, and I didn't have to deal with it that GC 2008.

But what about GC 2012? What if the votes go our way? What if we get a small victory? Or a big victory? How will we react? In society at large, we see the tide turning on an issue as previously divisive and seemingly impenetrable as same gender marriage. Several polls have shown there's now a slim majority in favor. Could 2012 be the year votes start to go our way at General Conference? Could The United Methodist Church finally start to change from its traditional role of being the tail light of society to at least being a forward facing running light, if not a quite yet a headlight?

We've thrown together acts of protest over the years. Maybe we should start planning acts of celebration. We'll need something that's visible to the delegates in the same way the protests have been. We need something that expresses our gratitude. And yet, we need to make it quite clear that any gains made must stay in place and that new gains continue to happen.

So what will our act of celebration be? Dream big. This GC could be when we see the tide start to turn.

Affirmation Needs You to Volunteer at GC 2012

April 24, 2012 the General Conference (GC) of the United Methodist Church will open in Tampa, FL. Affirmation will once again be an active participant in the Common Witness Coalition. It will run through May 4, 2012. We will need people who can witness to our Church and lead our movement forward.

If you are planning on attending, please register on Survey Monkey so we know. The website is www.surveymonkey.com/s/XG6QKHR.

If you are unable to attend GC 2012, consider a special gift to Affirmation. We plan to make it feasible for all interested people to be present.

Looking Backward; Looking Forward

By Tim Tennant-Jayne,
Co-Spokesperson

Affirmation: United Methodists gathered in September 2010 to mark our 35th Birthday. We met in San Francisco, CA, to spend time looking back at who we were and what we've done. We enjoyed stories and photos of previous events in the time-line of Affirmation. We celebrated the work we've accomplished in The United Methodist Church.

Remembering the past was part of what drew us together that weekend, but it was not the sole focus of the participants. Most of our time was spent looking forward at the work remaining. In workshops, we discussed using social media tools to spread the Gospel of God's love for all people and how to present ourselves to the religious and the secular media.

Of course, in very traditional Affirmation fashion, time was set aside for socializing and fun. Our noontime banquet included a 35th Birthday cake. People went sightseeing among the many selections of San Francisco. Some choose to take advantage of down time to renew established friendships or to begin new ones.

The Membership Meeting was one of the best-attended ones we've had for several years. It was great to see such involvement. While gathered we confirmed the election of some Council members and added a

(Continued on page 11)

Jeanne Knepper Returns to Council

By Jeanne Knepper

I'm honored to serve on the Affirmation Council after an absence of a decade. The Council has asked me to tell you who I am—shades of college application essays dance in my head—so, I'll try to be brief and not overly boring.

I'm a United Methodist pastor, ordained deacon in 1982 and elder in 1996, subject of the 1993 Judicial Council Decision 702, ruling that annual conferences and/or the General Conference must define "self-avowed practicing homosexual" and "status" and must follow due process to remove someone from ministry. I have been pastor of University Park United Methodist Church, a small, diverse reconciling congregation in North Portland, OR, for a decade. I have a Ph.D. in Religion and Social Change, combining history and ethics, with particular emphasis on the religious aspects of the anti-slavery, anti-war, women's, labor, and civil rights movements. My dissertation focused on the early history of the Methodist Federation for Social Action. I think the adjectives pragmatic, strategic, long-range, visionary, bold and nuanced apply to my work for change. I have been inspired and developed in my work for Affirmation by the solid and playful presence of the team of Mary Gaddis and Morris Floyd. I know that dates me, but it's a good thing to have grown as an activist under their leadership.

I have been a member of Affirmation since 1982, was a member of the Council from 1991 -2001, and was a co-spokesperson for the council for about 7 years. I retired from the Council when I was appointed to serve UPUMC, as I wanted to affirm to the congregation that I was fully committed to being their pastor. I love being a pastor.

Spiritually, I am deeply grounded by an experience/vision of meeting Jesus and being told, "Take my hand." I endeavor never to let go as I walk this Way. Like him, I try and intend to put the will of God at the center of my life. The prayer *Thy kingdom [realm] come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven* is visceral to me, the source of my continuing commitment to a church and world where all people can live in God's *shalom*, in the *beloved community*, to use the language of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Relationally, I am parent, partner, sister, aunt and grandmother. In my specificity, I am lesbian, stout, 63, white, and living with a few health challenges.

I am from and love the Pacific Northwest. In my play time, I love to watch nature, canoe, read, bake bread, dance, write music. I try to go to Hawaii yearly, seeking out the islands of Kauai and Molokai for their low-key quiet. At my most joyfully playful, I am either standing on my hands in water or paddling a boat somewhere.

Update Your Contact Info!

It's important for you to notify us when you move. Relying on the US Postal Service's address correction service can be iffy at best.

It also helps if we have an up-to-date email address in case your snail mail starts coming back.

Email us at affirmation_at_yahoo.com [Replace the "_at_" with "@"] (Subject: "Address Change") or drop us a line at: Affirmation, PO Box 1021, Evanston IL 60204-1021.

New Exciting Brochures Available!

The Affirmation brochure has been updated post GC 2008. If you'd like to help spread the word about Affirmation, let us know. We'll print and mail you a few. Keep in mind printing time. (The brochures take a fair amount of time to print.)

Send an email to umaffirmation_at_yahoo.com (Replace the "_at_" with "@") (Subject: "Brochures") or drop us a line at:

Affirmation
PO Box 1021
Evanston IL 60204-1021

Quote: Persistance

When nothing seems to help, I go and look at a stone-cutter hammering away at his rock perhaps a hundred times without so much as a crack showing in it. Yet at the hundred and first blow it would split in two, and I know it was not that blow that did it, but all that had gone before together.
- Jacob A. Riis, journalist and social reformer (1849 - 1914)

Council Welcomes New Member

By Diana Chalfant

I am so honored to be a part of national Affirmation. I'm a rookie trying to learn the ropes among this talented seasoned group.

I pray that change is coming and that God will use me to help facilitate that change in the United Methodist church. I have been part of the United Methodist church all my life. It started in Granville, OH in 1964 where my Great Grandfather, Gilbert Chalfant, baptized me as an infant.

I'm a member of Edgehill United Methodist Church in Nashville, TN, one of only a few Reconciling churches in the Nashville area. I came to EUMC in January 1995 a month after being fired from my coaching position at Lindsey Wilson College in Columbia, KY for my sexual orientation.

Edgehill UMC has been a great source of love and acceptance for me as a gay woman. I am grateful for all the past and current leadership at EUMC around the reconciling movement. Our work is not done until all means all and everyone has a place at the table. Please pray for each of us as we continue to work for the right to worship as children of God.

What's With This "_at_" Business?

We've found out the hard way that if we publish real email addresses in our newsletter and put the newsletter on-line, the addresses are harvested by spammers' web spiders and the addresses see a sharp increase in spam. Years ago we hit on the idea of showing all email addresses with the "_at_". We assume that even if we forget to put in the explanation, everyone should be able to figure it out.

It's taken years for the spam generated from the addresses harvested from newsletters before we started doing this to die off. One person's email account has finally gotten back to receiving more real email than spam. He's extremely happy to have his email account back.

Treasurer Reports on Affirmation's FY 2010

By Jan Olson, Treasurer

Affirmation's fiscal year 2010-2011 ended on April 30, 2011. Once again Affirmation has ended the fiscal year having brought in more money than it has spent. As in recent years I applaud our non-profit organization for being fiscally responsible. I want to especially thank Affirmation Council members for the contributions they have made. In the last fiscal year over $5000 has been given as in-kind donations (personal expenses on behalf of the organization that have not been submitted for reimbursement).

But, like in other years, there is a downside to this seemingly improbable outcome. Because the income has been reduced this year…so has the work that has been done by Affirmation. We cut corners just like everyone else in this economy. Had we put out our regular amount of newsletters we would have been over our yearly budget. Had we sent representatives to all the important conferences and events that impact the lives of our members and our organization we would have been over our yearly budget. Had we had greater, direct involvement with the people who have a say in the outcome of General Conference 2012 we would have been over our yearly budget. I think you get the point.

I have seen and heard the hopes and dreams of the members of Affirmation's council in our fight for a more inclusive United Methodist Church. But those hopes and dreams require commitment, not just from those we have elected to work and speak for us, but from all of us. Join me. Commit yourself to the fight. Give of your time, your energy, your ideas and your financial support. It won't get done any other way.

(A copy of the treasurer's year-end reports are available upon a written request to the PO Box or email us at umaffirmation_at_yahoo.com – replace "_at_" with "@".)

Affirmation Spoke Out on Many Topics

God's Spirit at Work

Wednesday, July 21, 2010

By Co-spokesperson Tim Tennant-Jayne

God's Spirit was clearly at work at the 2010 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA). Affirmation: United Methodists for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Concerns supports their decision to ordain gay and lesbian clergy who are in same-gender relationships. By this action, the Presbyterian Church (USA) joins an ever growing number of Judeo-Christian faith groups who recognize that God calls a variety of people for the special service of ordination.
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/UMCalledOut/message/3453

Celebrating Marital Justice

Wednesday, Aug. 11, 2010

By Co-spokesperson Tim Tennant-Jayne

Affirmation United Methodists joins our voice in celebrating the recent judicial decision declaring Proposition 8 unconstitutional. We recognize that this is only one step in a journey that still has a distance to go. We hope that the courts will soon allow same-gender marriages to continue in California. As a grass-roots organization that makes decisions by consensus, we promote the democratic process of popular opinion and decision making. However, we also recognize that at times the majority decisions are not the most just or Christian.
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/UMCalledOut/message/3485

A Call to End Bullying

Monday, Oct. 18, 2010

By Co-spokesperson Tim Tennant-Jayne

Various news media carried a number of reports lately of teenagers bullying their peers. Some of the bullied teens found ways to resist the torment while others ended the abuse through suicide. The common factor is that their peers harassed these persons for being lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer (LGBTQ).
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/UMCalledOut/message/3578

Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Don't Talk About It

Monday, Oct. 18, 2010

By Co-spokesperson Tim Tennant-Jayne

Even though a federal judge has put a hold on Don't Ask, Don't Tell (DADT), this rule still remains in force due to a filibuster in the US Senate. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) United States military must continue to guard their identity or face expulsion from the service.
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/UMCalledOut/message/3577

Comments on the Bishops' *Statement*

Thursday, April 14, 2011

By Co-spokesperson Tim Tennant-Jayne

Affirmation: United Methodists for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Concerns celebrates the recent *Statement of Counsel to the Church – 2011* signed by nearly half of the retired United Methodist Bishops. This statement recognizes current errors in *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* and proclaims that indeed, all human beings are beloved Children of God. This is the message of inclusion Affirmation: United Methodists is promoting.
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/UMCalledOut/message/3810

(Continued on page 9)

Donor Gives Her Testimony

By Kathryn Mitchem

I was blessed in my early life with strong stewardship role models -- my parents.

I experienced their love for, and stewardship of, the land we farmed, when hearing the stories they told when leading a Sunday School class, or a United Methodist Women Unit or a 4-H club meeting. I witnessed their openness about and generosity of sharing resources with people and groups near at hand and far away, known and unknown.

A tithe of time and money was given to the local church. "Beyond tithe" went to needs of people and groups beyond church, whether faith or community based, marginalized people and groups who weren't likely recipients from many others.

Thus I learned by example and have felt strongly called to do the same all my life. While the total of my resources has never been large by usual standards, I've always known that the smaller gifts are critical to the marginalized receivers.

To contribute the most I can has meant spreading my gift across the year in smaller monthly or quarterly portions.

By its activist nature, Affirmation has never been high on the list for mainstream donors, whether of those with money or time to give. But it has been in the mainstream of support for LGBT Christians for 35 years!

For all of those 35 years Affirmation has been a central support in my life as a United Methodist lesbian -- so it's been of central importance to me to give leadership hours and dollars out of deep gratitude and as generously as my life makes possible!

Affirmation Spoke ...

(Continued from page 8)

An Open Letter to Erin Hawkins

Tuesday, May 17, 2011
By Co-spokesperson Tim Tennant-Jayne

Dear Ms. Hawkins:

Thank you for your prophetic words in your commentary, *What I Didn't Say at the Leadership Summit*. Your presence at the Leadership Summit is a reminder that our United Methodist Church has very faithfully engaged in "addressing issues of inclusion" in the past. We recognized the importance of acknowledging that God's children are of different genders, races, ages, ethnicities, national origins, and physical or mental abilities. And we continue to be aware of these concerns and know we must continue to address them. We have learned to discuss these concerns in faith and in love. Now this denomination needs to again expand our discussion of inclusion to embrace the issues of sexual orientation and gender identity.

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/UMCalledOut/message/3834

The Spirit of God is Moving

Tuesday, May 31, 2011
By Co-spokesperson Tim Tennant-Jayne

United Methodists celebrate the day in May, over two hundred years ago when John Wesley's "heart was strangely warmed" and he experienced the power of God's Spirit in his life. This event led the Rev. Wesley to found what is now The United Methodist Church. As we approach the anniversary of that momentous event, Affirmation: United Methodists for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Concerns celebrates how this May, the Spirit of God has warmed the hearts of the members of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and of the national legislative body in Uganda.

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/UMCalledOut/message/3844

Malaria 'n' LGBTQ Folks: Aren't Both Important?

By Anonymous

[We really don't like running anonymous articles but sometimes there's a very good reason. This person has seen punishment appointments given to his / her clergy for his / her presence in the church and for his / her pastor's LGBTQ friendliness.]

The Google search, "imagine no malaria umc" brings up "about 539,000" hits as I write this article.

The United Methodist Church has a very noble goal. We (as a church) want to wipe out malaria by 2015. This will take (of course) a lot of fund raising, and a lot of resources. The Google search, "imagine no malaria umc" brings up "about 539,000" hits as I write this article.

What a wonderful thing to be involved with. What an altruistic goal, to eliminate a horrific tropical disease and make all the sorrow it generates a thing of the past. How noble, gracious, fine, decent, righteous, splendid, gallant, and self-sacrificing. What a dignified thing to do.

Yet there's something the U.S. bishops could have done that would have cost them a few minutes at the most with very little hard dollar cost that would have had just as great an impact.

Denounce anti-LGBTQ bullying. Just give it even one tenth the attention *Imagine No Malaria* gets. Just a press release now and then.

Yes, such a simple thing. It doesn't require massive fundraising efforts. It doesn't require the shipping of anti-mosquito nets (still $10 a pop, last I heard) to Africa, doesn't require trainers to instruct everyone in how and why to use the nets and what else they can do to avoid malaria.

Just a simple press release now and then. "Bullying anyone is wrong, and anti-LGBTQ bullying is especially wrong." If they want, I'll have a go at writing the press release if words fail them. They have plenty of words (and DVDs sent to every church in my conference) about "Imagine No Malaria." But bullying? I'm just not hearing much of anything. If anything at all was ever said, I never heard it.

But malaria! Can't pick up a copy of *The Interpreter* or *United Methodist Reporter* (at least the edition distributed in my conference) without seeing references to *Imagine No Malaria.*

Maybe I'm over-sensitive. But then again, I'm an anti-LGBTQ bullying survivor, from a time where our role models were LGBTQ people in pulp fiction novels that went insane, committed suicide, were jailed for "deviant behavior", or "were rescued from a life of depravity" by the end of the book. Don't tell me it's not true. I read them. I wondered who those people were. They certainly weren't me. I could very well have been an un-documented anti-gay bullying suicide in the mid '60s or early '70s.

In the early '90s, my partner and I, and my partner's ex-spouse were at their child's school at opening time the morning after we found out the child had been anti-gay bullied in phys ed the day before. Fortunately, the child came forward and told us what had happened. We took swift action, and the school in turn took swift action. Notably missing? The child's at-the-time step-parent. By not standing up against it, he / she was complicit in and supporting the bullying.

Here's a message to our bishops: *Hey, I get the malaria thing.* I'm working for it in my local church. But for Christ's sake, could y'all get off your butts and speak out about bullying in general and anti-LGBTQ bullying in particular? What are you afraid of? That you might prevent a suicide? Good grief, you're bishops, and you're supposed to lead. For crying out loud, get out front and lead on this!

Maybe I'm over-sensitive. But then again, I'm an anti-LGBTQ bullying survivor, from a time where our role models were LGBTQ people in pulp fiction novels that went insane, committed suicide, were jailed for "deviant behavior", or "were rescued from a life of depravity" by the end of the book.

Affirmation National Council

Laci Adams
Atlanta, GA
[redacted]

Diana Chalfant
Smyrna TN
[redacted]

Lyn Ellis, Co-coordinator
Columbus, OH
[redacted]

Walter Lockhart
Minneapolis, MN
[redacted]

Stephen Mallett, Co-coordinator
Nashville TN
[redacted]

Jeanne Knepper
Portland OR
[redacted]

Rev. Tim Tennant-Jayne,
Co-spokesperson
Minneapolis, MN
[redacted]

*** Note: substitute the symbol "@" for the letters "_at_" in the email addresses above.**

Looking Back, Looking Forward

(Continued from page 5)

couple of new ones [see separate articles]. We revised our organizational By-Laws. This was done to reflect necessary legal changes and to streamline the operation of Affirmation: United Methodists. Our changes include officially becoming Affirmation: United Methodists for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Concerns (we affirmed the name we'd been using), changing our fiscal year from May 1 – April 30 to a calendar year (so it never ends in the middle of a General Conference), and reducing the number of Council members (so we keep our diversity without becoming top-heavy for the organization).

We left San Francisco very excitedly looking forward to General Conference 2012. As part of our preparation for this we will join with our Coalition partners, Methodist Federation for Social Action and the Reconciling Ministries Network at Sing a New Song [see separate article] to officially kick-off our General Conference work.

Council Plans...

(Continued from page 1)

productive discussions sitting on the deck overlooking the swollen creek.

Steve met with us for our first full day of work, and was very helpful in our discussions of plans for Affirmation, MFSA and RMN to work together over the next year. Steve shared with us a draft of the *Common Witness Mission Statement*, which we all agreed was well done.

On top of our agenda was making plans for our role at General Conference in spring 2012 as well as plans for Sing A New Song, the Coalition Conference to be held in Huron OH (near Cleveland) Thursday, Aug 25 through Sunday, Aug 28 [see separate article].

We scheduled our next Council meeting for early in November in Tampa. At that meeting we will focus on plans for General Conference, Wed. April 25 through Friday May 4. We hope to make contact with the large local LGBTQ community there in Tampa and recruit their help in making our presence large at GC. We plan to have matching T-shirts for all Affirmation volunteers and will probably again distribute the rainbow bandannas (Outies) which were so popular at GC 2008. We are suggesting that the Common Witness partners have a unified newsletter with each group having its own page or section so we don't overload delegates with three different handouts each day. The Tampa Convention Center faces a large inlet of Tampa Bay, and there is a harbor for boats close by. One vision we have is to have a sailboat with a large rainbow sail cruising around in front of the Center reminding delegates of our presence each day. Please let the Council know if you have any contacts for sailboats in Tampa.

Affirmation
AN INDEPENDENT VOICE FOR:
UNITED METHODISTS FOR LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER, AND QUEER CONCERNS

Affirmation

Seize This Opportunity!

Can you smell it in the wind? Can you feel the rush of fresh air? Can you sense the excitement rising? Can you picture preparing for and then being at GC 2012 in Tampa, FL?

Put yourself into this picture. First – register for "Sing a New Song" (SANS) which will be Thursday, Aug. 25 – Sunday, Aug. 28 at the beautiful Sawmill Creek Resort in Huron, OH. You can go online to www.sans2011.org and register (also learn details about the event).

Then – here's when it gets exciting – volunteer for the Common Witness Coalition for Affirmation, Reconciling Ministries Network (RMN) and Methodist Federation for Social Action (MFSA). We will need people who can witness to our Church and lead our movement forward.

We need qualified people in the mental health field to be available for others to refer those needing extra help during the conference (it's a very stressful time). We need your help to help with organizing office and technical support tasks. We need people who are willing to participate in flash mobs or demonstrations. We need people who get up early hand out newsletters to GC delegates. Finally, we need people who would like to hang out and have fun while volunteering with the coalition.

If you can volunteer for GC 2012, please register on Survey Monkey (www.surveymonkey.com/s/XG6QKHR) and let us know how you'd like to participate.

If you are unable to attend GC 2012, please consider giving a special gift to Affirmation (www.umaffirm.org). We want to make it feasible for all interested people to be present.

Affirmation: United Methodists for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Concerns
PO Box 1021; Evanston, IL 60204-1021
umaffirmation_at_yahoo.com
www.umaffirm.org
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/UMCalledOut